

Scientific Affairs Committee Action

by Mel Goodale

As the new Chair of Scientific Affairs, I want to thank my predecessor in this position, Dr. Richard Steffy, for the many contributions he has made to the advancement of psychological research in this country. In working closely with Dick over the past two years, I had an opportunity to witness first-hand the tremendous amount of work he has done for the research community. Not only has he responded quickly to the many concerns individuals in the community have raised but he has developed and maintained excellent relations with the various funding agencies that support research in Canada. I am particularly grateful to Dick for leaving me with an effective network of contacts with these various agencies and organizations, a network that is essential for science advocacy. Thank you, Dick!

One important change in the structure of the Scientific Affairs Committee (SAC) this year is the creation of a co-Chair. This year my co-Chair on SAC is Mark Zanna, who like me occupies one of the two designated Scientist slots on the Board of Directors. We have made this change in the committee to target more effective the agencies that support the two main streams of research in our discipline -- psychology as a social science and psychology as a natural science. While Mark will take responsibility for handling communications with SSHRC and other social science related agencies, I will be doing the same with NSERC and MRC. Responsibilities for communication with other agencies such as NHRDP and various provincial funding councils will be divided between us. (Needless to say, we will be relying on Dick Steffy's help now and then as we find our way through the corridors of power in Ottawa.)

One of the biggest problems facing CPA with respect to science is the fact that most of the mainstream experimental psychologists in this country do not belong to our organization. For example, more than two-thirds of the individuals who apply to the Psychology Grant Selection Committee of NSERC are not members of CPA. Most of them instead belong to organizations such as the Society for Neuroscience and the Psychonomic Society. Over the last year, however, many people in this segment of the research community have begun to realize that they had to organize themselves nationally if they wished to represent their needs to the government and to funding agencies such as NSERC. (The necessity for this kind of science advocacy was brought home to these scientists when NSERC decided to remove the Psychology Grant Selection Committee from the Life Sciences Division without properly consulting them, the community most affected by such a decision.) As a



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consequence, a new organization has been borne, the Canadian Society for Brain, Behaviour, and Cognitive Science, with the explicit aim of developing an effective program of science advocacy. Some 350 psychologists have joined CSBBS (an organization in search of a name that will yield a shorter acronym) since the letters went out in August and it is expected that over 500 members will have signed up by the end of the year.

As someone who was directly involved in the formation of CSBBS, I should perhaps explain why we felt it necessary to start another psychological society, particularly one that is independent from CPA. The reason is really quite simple. As CPA becomes more oriented towards psychology as a profession, its relevance for the

scientific community in psychology becomes less and less obvious. In fact, even though CPA as a whole is growing, the proportion of its members who are scientists is rapidly shrinking. The perceived "professionaliz-

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ation" of CPA coupled with the relatively high membership fee has created a situation where it is unlikely to attract or even keep as members, those individuals in the research community who regard themselves primarily as scientists. This is particularly true of the NSERC-supported researchers. In polling that community, it became clear to those of us working on behalf of this kind of scientific psychology within CPA that it was unlikely that we could convince these individuals to become members of CPA. It seemed to us therefore that the best solution to this dilemma was to create an autonomous organization that could work together with CPA to create not only a joint policy with respect to science advocacy but an effective means for carrying out that policy. One of the main concerns of the new Science Task Force, which has been created to look at ways of improving the state of scientific psychology in Canada, will be to work out the best way for CPA and this new organization of largely NSERC-supported scientists to combine forces. ■

Ethics Code under CPA review

"...more explicit about the responsibilities of psychologists as scientists"

Dr. Carole Sinclair
• Toronto

The Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, adopted by CPA in 1986, has been undergoing a review over the past year. The first step was to ask CPA members, provincial associations, and provincial regulatory bodies for feedback about the Code and recommendations for changes. The responses to this request were added to comments collected by the CPA Committee on Ethics over the past four to five years and a review of recent ethics literature. A draft revision was produced and circulated in the Spring of 1990.

Although there was consistent agreement with the proposed changes, concern was expressed that the Code be more explicit about the responsibilities of psychologists as scientists. Mel Goodale, Chair of the Scientific Affairs Committee, has helped us to identify the issues and to track down relevant material from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.



The Committee on Ethics is currently working on a second draft of the revised Code which will more directly incorporate the scientific responsibility issue and other suggestions received since the first draft was circulated. We anticipate that the second draft will be ready for circulation in November, 1990. If you received a copy of the first draft, you will receive the second draft. If not, you can be added to our mailing list by writing to the following address:

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MISE A JOUR DE LA REVISION DU CODE DE DEONTOLOGIE PROFESSIONNELLE

Une révision du Code canadien de déontologie professionnelle pour les psychologues, adopté par la SCP en 1986, fut entreprise au cours de l'an dernier. La première étape de cette révision consistait à demander aux membres de la SCP, aux associations provinciales et aux organismes régulateurs provinciaux, de nous faire parvenir leurs commentaires et leurs suggestions pour y apporter des changements. La réponse à cette demande vint s'ajouter aux commentaires recueillis par le Comité de la déontologie professionnelle de la SCP au cours des quatre/cinq dernières années et à la revue de la récente littérature en matière de déontologie. Une ébauche de cette révision fut distribuée au printemps de 1990.

Bien que la plupart des psychologues sont d'accord avec les changements proposés, ils voudraient que le Code soit plus précis quant aux responsabilités des psychologues comme scientifiques. Le président du Comité des affaires scientifiques, Mel Goodale, nous a aidé à identifier les problèmes, à retracer et à se procurer le matériel pertinent auprès de l'association américaine pour l'avancement de la science.

Le Comité de la déontologie professionnelle s'occupe actuellement de rédiger la deuxième ébauche du Code révisé qui traitera directement de la responsabilité scientifique et de d'autres sujets qui nous furent suggérés depuis la distribution de la première ébauche. Nous nous attendons à ce que la deuxième ébauche soit prête pour être distribuée en novembre 1990. Si vous avez reçu la première ébauche, vous recevrez la deuxième automatiquement. Si ce n'est pas le cas, vous pourrez faire ajouter votre nom à notre liste d'envoi en nous écrivant à l'adresse suivante:

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